

March 3, 2008

Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

RE: MB Docket No. 04-233 Response to Localism Notice of Proposed Rulemaking

Dear Commissioners:

It has been brought to our attention that the Federal Communications Commission is proposing a number of costly and onerous new regulated requirements on *all* broadcasters to air local news and other public affairs programming based on predetermined benchmarks that would be considered in the renewal time. For non-commercial educational radio, if adopted, these proposals would have exactly the opposite affect from that which is intended.

KBIA is a non-commercial educational radio entity and is inherently local. As part of a public educational institution, KBIA's mission is to inform, engage and uplift the communities we serve by providing content of significance, depth, diversity, vibrancy, and integrity.

KBIA strives to provide quality, in-depth programming to our listeners. We do that through a mix of programming obtained from regional and national producers as well as programming we produce locally. The local programming includes music, arts and culture, public affairs, political coverage, news and documentaries. Last year, KBIA had almost 1800 hours of local programming. KBIA's News Department (three full time employees and over 100 student reporters) is responsible for eight daily news casts as well as producing daily in-depth programming on topics ranging from education, business, science/health/technology, politics, and arts/cultural issues. KBIA is teaming with other media in the community to provide local coverage of this political season.

KBIA has been multicasting since 2006 (adding a third channel in November 2007) to expand and improve our public service by providing our listeners in 16 rural Mid-Missouri counties with high quality and diverse programming. KBIA uses our web site to supplement and augment our over-the-air program services. We stream our over-the-air programming for the benefit of those who have computer access. We also take advantage of the Internet's unique

capabilities. For instance, we use our web site to build on our local programming by providing access to expanded interviews, transcripts, pictures, and links to additional resource and to offer Internet-only content.

KBIA ascertains the community's needs through a variety of mechanisms, including surveys, participation of station personnel in other community institutions and activities. Most of all, KBIA's continued success, if not viability, is inextricably linked to individual listeners and local businesses making significant financial contributions to KBIA. Gifts from listeners and local underwriters account for almost two-thirds of KBIA's operating budget. Our community sees KBIA as a local institution and financially supports our programming.

KBIA's continued existence as a public, non-profit educational organization is dependent on serving our community and does not need any new regulatory obligations to fulfill its public service mission. In the case of stations like KBIA, the FCC's goal of enhancing localism will be best served by maintaining the existing flexibility we have to serve the needs and interests of our listeners.

Requiring each station to maintain a main studio in its community of license and the presence of station personnel during all times of operation may appear to promote localism, but it would likely have the opposite effect on KBIA. This would force us to reallocate resources away from developing and acquiring locally responsive programming. If these changes are adopted, KBIA may well have to reduce our hours of operation or consider abandoning costly local programming. Likewise, imposing mandatory minimum program origination obligations, enhanced disclosure requirements, and new license renewal processing guidelines will increase our administrative costs at a time when we are already under-resourced and increasingly stretched thin financially.

Just as importantly, our community is best served when a locally owned, staffed, and programmed station such as KBIA, rather than the FCC, determines the appropriate mix of local, regional, and national programming.

While several of the initial comments on the localism issue urged the Commission to develop new public interest obligations, these comments were focused specifically on commercial broadcast stations. We submit there is no justification for imposing new regulatory requirements on public radio stations because of the inherent local character of these non-commercial educational entities. Therefore, in the matter of localism, KBIA implores the FCC to exempt public radio stations from any of the proposed new regulatory burdens.

Sincerely,

Michael W. Dunn, Ph.D.  
General Manager

Cc: Senator Christopher Bond  
Senator Claire McCaskill  
Representative Kenny Hulshof